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AUTHOR Haanstra, Folkert; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Art education in The Netherlands, which had been dominated by an expressive approach that emphasized creative self-expression, has recently changed its emphasis to reflect a discipline-based approach and the wish for more accountability in art instruction. Final examinations have been produced for secondary art classes, with the testing of art production left to the individual school and art history and analysis assessed through state-controlled written examinations students may elect to take. This study investigated the effects of art examination programs in secondary education on both the cultural participation (enjoyment and appreciation of the arts) of students later in life and their career choices. The cultural participation and careers of 1,031 students from 31 secondary schools who took the art examinations between 1975 and 1985 were studied. Students who chose the art examinations were already more culturally active before the start of the examination program in terms of art activities and art "consumption." At 10 to 20 years after the examinations, students who took them were more active consumers of art and had more favorable attitudes toward art than those who did not even when controlling for students' prior interests. Students who chose art examinations were more likely to pursue education in which art activities were required and were slightly more likely to follow careers with high cultural status, although the taking of art examinations was not related to career economic status. Whether or not art examinations should be a required part of a secondary school humanities examination packet is discussed. (Contains two figures, seven tables, and nine references.) (SLD)

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Paper presented at the AERA Annual Meeting, March 24-28 1997, Chicago

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Folkert Haanstra
Wil Oud

SCO-Kohnstamm Institute
University of Amsterdam

Ineke Nagel
Harry Ganzeboom

Dept. of Sociology
University Utrecht

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## Introduction

For almost two decades after the second World War, art education in The Netherlands was dominated by the 'expressive' movement, a child-centered approach with creative self-expression as the principal goal. It was based on general theories of human growth and it emphasized studio art (that is drawing, painting, sculpture, etc.). The role of the teacher was best described as encouraging, not as guiding. Sequential written curricula and formal assessment of students' progress were rejected. It was believed that to a large degree art appreciation is a natural outcome of making art and it is not thought to be fostered by the teaching of a vocabulary to describe and analyze works of art nor by knowledge about art history.

The antithesis of the expressionist movement is a so-called subject-oriented or discipline-based approach. In this approach art is viewed as a subject with a content that can be taught and learned in ways that resemble how other subjects are taught in schools. Teachers are expected to teach their students by using written, sequentially organized curricula and student progress is verified through use of appropriate evaluation methods. Another characteristic is that there should be a balance between "hands-on" studio instruction and a theoretical part (art criticism, art history, aesthetics). Studio art alone is not thought to be very effective in teaching art analysis and art appreciation.

In the last decades this disciplined-based art education has become the dominant stream in both American art education (Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1985) and Dutch art education. In The Netherlands the experimental introduction in secondary education of examinations in visual arts (and music) in the 1970's marks the growing influence of a discipline-based approach (Haanstra, 1994). The examinations met the wish for more accountability in art subjects. Moreover: without final examinations school subjects simply have no status, so examinations are a necessity to survive. Adherents to the child-centered expressionist orientation in the arts were strongly opposed to the examinations. Examinations were considered a symbol of conformation to the traditional school system. The criticism leveled against the examinations was that they did not adequately reflect developmental goals, such as personal growth, nor other more affective goals, such as the aesthetic experience.

After different experimental phases the possibility of taking final examinations was officially recognized at all levels of secondary education, ranging from junior vocational training to preparatory academic secondary education. In the final examinations the testing of the art production skills is left to the discretion of the individual school. In the school exam students are required to create work pieces around two or three teacher mandated or individually chosen themes. In music technical and performance skills as well as listening skills are tested.

The theoretical part concerning art history and art analysis (or in case of music: music theory and music history) is tested in state-controlled written examinations. The highest level (the pre-university level) also has a nationwide practical examination (Beattie, 1990; Schönau 1996).

The art examination is not obligatory, but is elected by the examinee as one of four or five free choices. The examinations selected are called an 'examination packet'. Only one art subject is allowed in an examination packet. Dutch and English are mandatory examination subjects. Nowadays about 10% of all students in secondary education take an exam in the visual arts or music. Depending on the school level the examination program lasts one or two years and requires approximately four hours a week in prepatory lessons. In visual arts the examinee can elect either drawing, handicrafts or textiles. Students are taught principles of design and composition, different techniques, create work from observation and from phantasy, follow lessons in art history and art analysis and make excursions to museums and galleries. In music lessons performing and composing, improvisation, music theory, listening and appraising are taught.

Although the critique of the childcentered movement on the art examination has faded away the discussion on the art subjects in the curriculum continues. In discussions on *cultural policy* the question is raised to what extent art education is the most effective way to remedy the inequality of cultural participation in the population. In discussions on *educational policy* the question is raised whether art subjects are so-called soft subjects and detrimental to one's later educational and socio-economic career.

A research project from the University of Utrecht and the SCO-Kohnstamm Institute of the University of Amsterdam investigated the long-term effects of the art examination programs in secondary education. The effects concern both cultural participation and socio-economic careers in later life.

**Cultural participation**

Since decades the Dutch government has been trying to stimulate cultural participation in all groups and levels of the population. However all research on 'receptive' cultural participation shows that higher educated people still are overrepresented among visitors of museums and participants of the performing arts (classical music, theatre, ballet). This overrepresentation is less strong in 'productive' cultural participation: painting, playing instruments and performing by amateur artists. The overrepresentation of higher educated seems to be mostly related to differences in secondary education. Whether one has received a tertiary degree and whether this is a vocational one or an academic one does not matter much for the chances to become an arts consumer (Ganzeboom, 1996).

The association between education and cultural consumption has often been taken as a confirmation of one causal explanation: the *instruction model* of cultural participation. This model assumes that the arts constitute complex information that the potential consumers can be trained to understand and enjoy. Art education in schools can provide the students with the necessary cultural knowledge. The instruction model basically explains the association between cultural participation and education as a result from the higher level of art education that is offered in higher forms of education. The assumption of this model is that schools are able to instruct and train their students into whatever subject is chosen as a part of the curriculum and that this instruction has long-lasting effects.

Alternative interpretations of the association between education and arts participation are available: the *general ability model* and the *family background model*. They have in common the idea that the association between education and participation in the arts is mostly due to selection, that is the higher educated become art consumers for reasons that are favorable to both educational advancement and art consumption, but there is no causal effect from the former on the latter.

According to the general ability model the reason why the higher educated are better equipped for processing cultural information is not the transfer of arts-specific knowledge and abilities, but the fact that schools train and select on general cognitive abilities and expertise. The model argues that art education is unimportant relative to more general sources of cognitive abilities. The general ability argument can explain why audiences of some art forms (e.g. opera or classical dance) show a large overrepresentation of higher educated, whereas these art forms are not taught in schools.

The crucial test between the instruction model and the general ability model is in the direct effect of art instruction on later cultural participation: to what extent does instruction lead to higher participation while controlling for general ability. This research project tries to answer this question. But a third model should be taken into account as well: the family background model. In this interpretation art consumption mainly is a socially determined form of behavior, in which one needs to be socialized. The best breeding ground to become an active art participant is the social network in general, and the parental family in particular. The cultured family does not only promote the art participation of its off spring, but also its educational chances. According to this cultural reproduction theory of social stratification (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979) being socialized in the arts helps one to survive educational selection: the culturally socialized become the better educated. This means that in research into effects of art education on later cultural participation, the cultural socialization in the parental family must be investigated as well.

**Socio-economic careers**

Examination packets including modern languages, biology, geography, history and especially visual arts or music have been called 'fun combination of examination subjects' or 'party packets'. People who use these terms consider the art subjects as weak subjects and claim that choosing art as part of one's curriculum and final examination in secondary school is detrimental to a person's life chances, in particular in further education and the labor market. It would reduce the amount of further options in tertiary education and handicap the students in labor market selection process.

In sociological literature (e.g. Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979) there is an opposite view. It claims that cultural knowledge and the command of cultural codes promotes one's chances to become a member of the cultural elite. As mentioned above this cultural reproduction theory considers cultural socialization in the parental family as the most important factor. In addition it is expected that also art education can enable someone to increase his cultural status. Cultural knowledge and meeting with the prevailing cultural standards lead one into high status occupations in cultural fields (e.g. in teaching, science or government service), as well as to higher educated friends and -finally- spouse.

**Research questions**

The discussions on art examinations in cultural and in educational policy lead to the following research questions:

1. *To what extent are differences in cultural participation in later life between students who took art exams in secondary education and students who did not, due to the instruction in art examination subjects?*

2. *What are the effects of the election of an art subject in the examination packet on the educational and socio-economic careers of the students involved?*

**Research design and data**

The research project investigated the cultural and socio-economic careers of students who took the art examinations between 1975 and 1985 (and who are now between 25 and 35 years of age) and compared these to the careers of their schoolmates who did not take the art examinations (control group). Subjects are 1035 former secondary school students from 31 secondary schools at four different levels. They are distributed almost equally among the art examination group and the control group.

Data on the cultural and socio-economic careers were gathered with telephone interviews with subjects themselves. Information on art socialization in the parental family of subjects was obtained in two ways: by telephone interviews with their parents and a by a questionnaire of their siblings. Data on the examination programs in visual arts and music and on the general cultural programs of the 31 schools were gathered through interviews with art teachers and former art teachers.

Although the emphasis is on quantitative data, also qualitative data were gathered. Fifty students who had taken an art exam wrote a so-called learner report: a personal account about their learning experiences. A similar instrument has been used before in a research project into goals and effects of the examination programs in the arts (Van der Kamp, 1981).

**Who take the art exams?**

Before turning to the main research questions a preliminary question had to be answered: do students who take the art exams differ from their school mates without art examinations with respect to background variables and with respect to cultural participation before the start of the examination program?

Table 1 shows results of a regression analysis concerning factors that determine the election of visual arts. All analyses have been conducted for both the visual arts and music. In this paper the presentation of data is confined to the visual arts. Results on music will be mentioned briefly.

More girls than boys elect visual arts. In election of music as examination subject gender plays no role. When we look at the examination packet as a whole we see that a minority of students who elect visual arts also elect sciences and that most students combine arts with humanities and languages. But in comparison to their school mates who mainly elect languages and humanities in their examination packets they are not the weaker students. In fact the average grade of students who elect music is higher.

It was found that students who took the art exams were already more culturally active themselves at the age of 14, that is before the start of the examination program. This applies to art activities (painting, playing instruments, etc.) as well as to art consumption (museum visits etc.). The students come from culturally active parental families. Their parents participate more often in amateur art, attend more concerts, go to museums more often, etc.

The early developed interest and activities in art not only determine election of art subjects but probably cultural consumption in later life as well. These selection effects have to be controlled for in the final analyses of effects of the examination programs on receptive and productive cultural participation.

Table 1: Multiple regression of (1) control variables, (2) cognitive abilities, (3) cultural climate parental family and (4) cultural activities in youth on election of visual arts as examination subject. Standardized regression coefficients. (N = 1009)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Control variables:** | | | | |
| gender (female) | .173*** | .138*** | .138*** | .121*** |
| age | -.008 | -.019 | .001 | .021 |
| away from home | -.112** | -.111** | -.086* | -.066 |
| **2. Cognitive abilities:** | | | | |
| school report available | | -.050 | -.038 | -.039 |
| school level | | -.031 | -.054 | -.062* |
| main subjects: languages/humanities | | .092** | .084** | .062* |
| level of grades | | -.030 | -.027 | -.033 |
| **3.Cultural climate parental family:** | | | | |
| interview parents | | | -.005 | -.009 |
| education parents | | | -.032 | -.053 |
| parents: art consumption | | | .182*** | .107* |
| parents: music consumption | | | -.102* | -.056 |
| parents: art production | | | .079* | .052 |
| parents: music-making | | | .104** | .101** |
| **4. Cultural activities in youth:** | | | | |
| art consumption 14 yrs old | | | | .152*** |
| music consumption 14 yrs old | | | | -.056 |
| art production 14 yrs old | | | | .204*** |
| music-making 14 yrs old | | | | -.030 |
| $R^2$ | .050 | .062 | .104 | .173 |

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

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**Effects on receptive cultural participation**

Table 2 shows that 10 to 20 years after the examinations took place former students who elected art subjects are more active art consumers and have more favorable attitudes towards art than students who did not elect arts. The differences concern both art consumption at home (reading art books, listening to cd's, watching art programs on TV) and cultural consumption outdoors (visiting museums, attending concerts, etc.).

Table 2 . Receptive participation in the arts and taking art exams:

| | visual arts n=467 | music n=69 | no art subject n=497 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Cultural activities outdoors** | | | |
| visited an art museum in the past year | 49.5 % | 40.6 % | 35.4 % |
| visited an art museum in the past 6 months | 31.5 % | 20.3 % | 18.4 % |
| last museum visit concerned modern art | 22.2 % | 14.7 % | 13.1 % |
| attended concert for classical music in the past year | 27.4 % | 44.9 % | 20.2 % |
| attended concert for classical music in the past 6 months | 15.6 % | 27.5 % | 10.9 % |
| last concert concerned classical music/opera | 24.7 % | 39.7 % | 17.7 % |
| **Cultural activities at home** | | | |
| watches art programs on TV | 64.2 % | 44.9 % | 36.0 % |
| watches classical music on TV | 27.8 % | 49.3 % | 36.0 % |
| reads articles on art | 79.0 % | 62.3 % | 52.9 % |
| subscription to an art magazine | 10.1 % | 8.7 % | 3.8 % |
| has art books | 83.3 % | 47.8 % | 42.1 % |
| has paintings on the wall | 73.4 % | 72.5 % | 67.7 % |
| owns other art objects | 45.4 % | 34.8 % | 34.9 % |
| listens to classical music | 59.1 % | 71.0 % | 53.7 % |
| listens to music by modern composers | 22.3 % | 42.0 % | 20.4 % |
| listens to opera and/or light opera | 25.3 % | 36.2 % | 23.0 % |
| owns records/ cd's classical music | 53.3 % | 65.2 % | 47.5 % |
| owns records/cd's modern composers | 12.2 % | 27.5 % | 10.3 % |
| **Attitude towards modern art** | | | |
| agree with statements such as: | | | |
| "Modern art does not interst me, because in most cases you cannot see what it means" | 14.0 % | 32.8 % | 33.5 % |
| "When I see modern art I often think: 'my kid brother could do that" | 29.1 % | 45.6 % | 50.7 % |
| "I like modern art, because it offers interesting views on the world" | 45.4 % | 23.6 % | 22.6 % |

The question is to what extent the differences in cultural participation as shown in Table 2 are caused by passing an art exam, in other words whether the differences are due to instruction or to selection. Hierarchical regression was employed to determine if there was a significant difference in cultural participation between art students and their school mates and if such a difference would remain after controlling for other variables that can cause differences in cultural consumption.

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These other variables are: age, gender, whether or not the student lives away from his parental home; the cultural activities in school (e.g. concerts or museumvisits for all students); cognitive abilities (e.g. level of examination in secondary school, average of grades); the cultural "climate" of the parental family (e.g. educational level of the parents, cultural participation of the parents) and the cultural activities of the student when he was 14 years old. The dependent variable "receptive cultural participation in the visual arts" is the average on all visual art consumption variables.

Table 3: Multiple regression of (1) Art examination (2) control variables (3) Cultural activities school (4) Cognitive abilities (5) Cultural Climate parental family (6) Cultural activities in youth on receptive participation in the visual arts. (N = 1010)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Art examination subjects:** | **.313*** ** | **.330*** ** | **.331*** ** | **.324*** ** | **.271*** ** | **.203*** ** |
| examination visual arts | .321*** | .338*** | .338*** | .330*** | .276*** | .204*** |
| examination music | .037 | .038 | .033 | .019 | .023 | .008 |
| **2. Control variables:** | | **.132*** ** | **.114*** ** | **.097*** ** | **.094*** ** | **.104*** ** |
| age | | .056 | .025 | .003 | .036 | .046 |
| gender (female) | | -.112*** | -.105*** | -.094** | -.085** | -.092*** |
| away from home | | .046 | .051 | .040 | .015 | .007 |
| **3. Cultural activities school/art subject:** | | | **.136*** ** | **.049** | **.033** | **.041** |
| treatment visual arts | | | .096** | .036 | .015 | .004 |
| treatment music | | | .038 | .035 | .026 | .017 |
| cultural climate school | | | .059 | -.010 | .009 | .032 |
| **4. Cognitive abilities:** | | | | **.265*** ** | **.184*** ** | **.132*** ** |
| school level | | | | .226*** | .142*** | .102*** |
| school report available | | | | -.023 | -.004 | -.009 |
| main subject: languages/humanities | | | | .090** | .080** | .060* |
| level of grades | | | | .078** | .073** | .052* |
| **5. Cultural climate parental family:** | | | | | **.329*** ** | **.217*** ** |
| interview parents | | | | | .085** | .069** |
| education parents | | | | | .088* | .055 |
| parents: art consumption | | | | | .277*** | .194*** |
| parents: music consumption | | | | | -.050 | -.044 |
| parents: art production | | | | | -.022 | -.036 |
| parents: music-making | | | | | .055 | .035 |
| **6. Cultural activities in youth:** | | | | | | **.323*** ** |
| art consumption 14 yrs old | | | | | | .247*** |
| music consumption 14 yrs old | | | | | | .054 |
| art production 14 yrs old | | | | | | .111*** |
| music-making 14 yrs old | | | | | | .040 |
| $R^2$ | .099 | .116 | .133 | .189 | .285 | .363 |

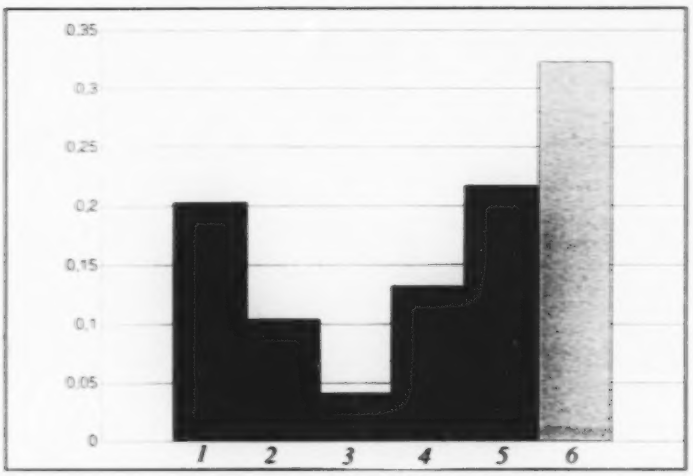
*** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05

Standardized regression coefficients; **Bold**: Sheaf-coefficients (weighted sum of variables concerned)

Results in Table 3 show that a significant effect of the art examination programs on later receptive cultural participation remains when controlling for the variables mentioned above. From the original uncorrected difference in cultural consumption between students who took the art exams and those who did not two third is accounted for by instruction. (Compare the figures in Table 3 in the first row from column 1 to column 6).

When we look at the relative influence of the different variables (graphical representation in Figure 1) we can conclude that cultural activities in youth and cultural climate in the parental family are the most important factors, followed by the instruction during the examination program. In addition to these factors the cognitive abilities (operationalized by schoollevel, examination packet and level of grades) and gender have effects on cultural participation.

Fig. 1 Relative influence of 6 factors on receptive participation in visual arts at later age




*1 = examination art subject*
*2 = control variables (age and gender)*
*3 = cultural activities school*
*4 = cognitive abilities*
*5 = cultural climate parental family*
*6 = cultural activities in youth*

*(Y-axis: standardized regression coefficients)*

Results concerning music consumption point in the same direction. However instruction in the visual arts leads to relatively larger differences in receptive cultural participation than the examination program in music. As expected the effects are discipline specific. This means that the examination programs in visual arts influence cultural participation in visual arts, but not in music.

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**Effects on productive cultural participation**

The effects on productive cultural participation have been analyzed in identical ways and the results will be presented in the same format. Table 4 shows that 10 to 20 years after the examinations took place former students who elected art subjects are more active amateur artists. The differences concern individual activities such as drawing and painting as well as group activities and taking lessons outside schools.

Table 4: Productive cultural participation and taking art exams

| | visual arts n=467 | music n=69 | no art subject n=497 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **as hobby ever:** | | | |
| drawing, painting, graphics | 75.6 % | 26.1 % | 30.6 % |
| sculpture, pottery, jewellery making | 43.9 % | 24.6 % | 19.5 % |
| textiles making | 41.5 % | 21.7 % | 27.6 % |
| music-making (singing, instrument) | 50.7 % | 87.0 % | 42.3 % |
| **in past year, sometimes or regularly:** | | | |
| drawing, painting, graphics | 45.2 % | 18.8 % | 12.9 % |
| sculpture, pottery, jewellery making | 13.7 % | 7.2 % | 5.2 % |
| textiles making | 27.6 % | 17.4 % | 17.5 % |
| music-making (singing, instrument) | 21.8 % | 59.4 % | 17.5 % |
| **taking lessons in past year** | | | |
| drawing, painting, graphics | 3.9 % | 1.4 % | 1.2 % |
| sculpture, pottery, jewellery making | 2.1 % | 1.4 % | 1.2 % |
| textiles making | 3.0 % | 2.9 % | 1.4 % |
| music-making (singing, instrument) | 10.5 % | 26.1 % | 5.4 % |

Again the question is raised to what extent the differences in productive cultural participation are due to instruction and to what extent to selection. A hierarchical regression analysis was performed to determine if there was a significant difference in productive cultural participation between art students and their school mates and if such a difference would remain after controlling for the following variables: age and gender; the cultural activities in school; cognitive abilities; the cultural climate of the parental family and the cultural activities in youth. 'Productive cultural participation in the visual arts' is the average of scores on all relevant variables concerning amateur art.

Table 5: Multiple regression of (1) Art examination (2) control variables (3) Cultural activities school (4) Cognitive abilities (5) Cultural climate parental family (6) Cultural activities in youth on productive participation in the visual arts. (N = 958)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Art examination subjects:** | **.248*** ** | **.199*** ** | **.199*** ** | **.202*** ** | **.193*** ** | **.128*** ** |
| examination visual arts | .252*** | .200*** | .200*** | .203*** | .192*** | .121*** |
| examination music | .011 | -.004 | -.005 | -.004 | -.012 | -.024 |
| **2. Control variables:** | | **.226*** ** | **.227*** ** | **.233*** ** | **.237*** ** | **.203*** ** |
| age | | -.004 | -.006 | .002 | .006 | .021 |
| gender (female) | | .225*** | .226*** | .232*** | .236*** | .203*** |
| away from home | | .003 | .004 | .004 | -.000 | -.012 |
| **3. Cultural activities school/art subject:** | | | **.031** | **.033** | **.035** | **.036** |
| treatment visual arts | | | -.006 | .000 | -.003 | -.006 |
| treatment music | | | .030 | .034 | .034 | .023 |
| cultural climate school | | | .008 | -.001 | .007 | .027 |
| **4. Cognitive abilities:** | | | | **.051** | **.052** | **.053** |
| school level | | | | -.002 | -.006 | -.024 |
| school report available | | | | .050 | .050 | .040 |
| main subject: languages/humanities | | | | -.010 | -.012 | -.026 |
| level of grades | | | | .001 | .005 | .005 |
| **5. Cultural climate parental family:** | | | | | **.090** ** | **.091** ** |
| interview parents | | | | | -.003 | -.011 |
| education parents | | | | | -.010 | -.041 |
| parents: art consumption | | | | | -.024 | -.041 |
| parents: music consumption | | | | | .030 | .042 |
| parents: art production | | | | | .020 | .005 |
| parents: music-making | | | | | .080* | .080* |
| **6. Cultural activities in youth:** | | | | | | **.280*** ** |
| art consumption 14 yrs old | | | | | | .024 |
| music consumption 14 yrs old | | | | | | -.005 |
| art production 14 yrs old | | | | | | .271*** |
| music-making 14 yrs old | | | | | | .039 |
| $R^2$ | .062 | .111 | .112 | .114 | .122 | .190 |

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

Standardized regression coefficients; **Bold**: Sheaf-coefficients (weighted sum of variables concerned)

Results in Table 5 show that a significant effect of the art examination programs on later productive cultural participation remains. From the original uncorrected difference in art activities between students who took the art exams and those who did not, half is accounted for by instruction. (Compare the figures in Table 5 in the first row from column 1 to column 6).

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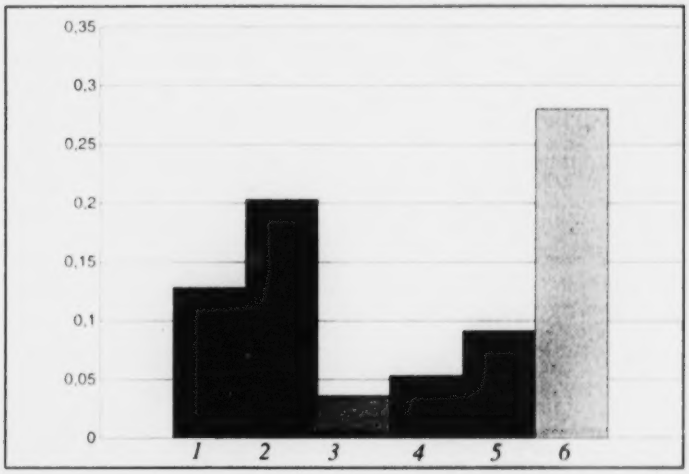
When we look at the relative influence of the different variables (graphical representation in Figure 2) we can conclude that the quantity of cultural activities in youth is the most important factor by far. Gender is an important factor as well: females are more active amateur artists. Especially the participation in textiles involves females only. The instruction during the examination program has a significant effect on productive cultural participation at later age, whereas cultural climate in the parental family only has a marginal effect. Cognitive abilities (operationalized by schoollevel, examination packet and level of grades) have no significant effect on amateur art activities.

Fig. 2 Relative influence of 6 factors on productive participation in visual arts at later age




*1 = examination art subject*
*2 = control variables (age and gender)*
*3 = cultural activities school*
*4 = cognitive abilities*
*5 = cultural climate parental family*
*6 = cultural activities in youth*

*(Y-axis: standardized regression coefficients)*

The results in music point in the same direction, however instruction accounts for larger effects than instruction in the visual arts. Gender plays no role in music making at later age. As in receptive participation the effects are discipline specific. The examination programs in music influence music making at later age, but not visual art activities. The effects of visual arts exams even are subject specific. This means that examinations in drawing have effects on two-dimensional art activities at later age (drawing, painting, graphics), whereas examinations in handicrafts mainly effect three-dimensional art activities such as sculpture, pottery, and jewellery making

**Effects on socio-economic career**

The second research question concerns the effects of art education on educational and socio-economic careers. In short the cultural reproduction theory predicts positive effects of art instruction on level of education and the cultural status of later occupations and the cultural status of social relations and partner. Negative effects on educational and socio-economic career are predicted by those who consider the election of 'soft' arts subjects as an easy way to pass your examination.

About 85% of the 1035 students in our sample followed one or more forms of further education after the examinations in secondary education. Students who took the art examinations and those who did not, reached the same final level of education, but students with art exams more often chose continuing education in which art subjects were required (such as teacher training for primary education). Considerably more students with art subjects visited an art academy or an academy of music.

Table 6: Multiple regression of (1) Level examination, Gender, Age (2) Art examination (3) Cognitive abilities (4) Parental family (5) Cultural activities in youth on cultural status occupation. (N = 924)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | | | | | |
| level examination | .292*** | .290*** | .132*** | .107** | .106** |
| gender (female) | .055 | .042 | .059 | .068* | .067* |
| age | .013 | .009 | .042 | .046 | .047 |
| away from home | .050 | .046 | .036 | .036 | .035 |
| (2) | | | | | |
| examination art subject | | .076 | .060 | .036 | .033 |
| (3) | | | | | |
| final educational level | | | .346*** | .314*** | .313*** |
| school report available | | | -.001 | .007 | .006 |
| main subjects: humanities/languages | | | .029 | .027 | .026 |
| level of grades | | | .015 | .018 | .018 |
| (4) | | | | | |
| interview parents | | | | .035 | .034 |
| education parents | | | | .025 | .022 |
| occupation father | | | | -.023 | -.023 |
| econ. status occupation father | | | | .010 | .010 |
| cult. status occupation father | | | | .055 | .055 |
| cultural participation parents | | | | .087* | .083* |
| (5) | | | | | |
| cultural activities youth | | | | | .017 |
| $R^2$ | .088 | .094 | .189 | .206 | .206 |

*** p < .001; ** p < .01; * p < .05

At the moment of the survey about 75% of the former students had a job. Students with and without an art exam report no differences in unemployment since they finished their education. Occupations can be classified according to both economic and cultural status (Ganzeboom, De Graaf & Kalmijn, 1987). The economic status is related to income level. Occupations with high economic status refer to management and business, whereas occupations with high cultural status refer to education, the academic world and the art world. Passing an art examination in secondary education is not related to the economical status of the occupation in later life. Former students with art exams do have occupations with higher cultural status. The effect is small and it disappears when we control for parental family, especially the cultural participation of parents. Table 6 shows the results of a hierarchical regression that was performed with the cultural status of occupation as the dependent variable. Besides cultural climate of the parental family, the cultural status of the occupation depends on the level of education and gender. On the average females have occupations with higher cultural status, whereas males hold positions with higher economical status.

Passing an art exam in secondary education is related to practising the profession of artist or art teacher. About 16% of the former students with art exams have become painters, sculptors, photographers, musicians, dancers or art teachers, while 4% of the students without art exams have become professional artists. As table 7 shows this effect of an art exam becomes smaller when we control for the cultural climate of the parental family and cultural participation at younger age. The percentages mentioned above are 14 and 5 respectively after controlling for selection.

Table 7: Multiple regression of (1) Level examination, Gender, Age (2) Art examination (3) Cognitive abilities (4) Parental family (5) Cultural activities in youth on occupation as a professional artist. (N=1025)

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | | | | | |
| level examination | .087** | .084** | .038 | .002 | .006 |
| gender (female) | -.032 | -.072* | -.087** | -.082*** | -.090** |
| age | -.026 | -.035 | -.033 | -.014 | -.012 |
| away from home | .050 | .039 | .036 | .018 | .014 |
| (2) | | | | | |
| examination art subject | | .208*** | .197*** | .173*** | .148*** |
| (3) | | | | | |
| final educational level | | | .096* | .070* | .057 |
| school report available | | | -.028 | -.012 | -.013 |
| main subjects: humanities/languages | | | .070* | .066* | .059 |
| level of grades | | | -.018 | -.012 | -.015 |
| (4) | | | | | |
| interview parents | | | | .069* | .061* |
| education parents | | | | .100** | .084* |
| cultural participation parents | | | | .100** | .074* |
| (5) | | | | | |
| cultural activities youth | | | | | .117*** |
| $R^2$ | .011 | .053 | .064 | .097 | .108 |

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$



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At the time the survey was held 70% of the former students had a partner. On the average the students with art exams had a partner with higher educational level and an occupation with higher cultural status. However, not the art examinations but cultural climate of the parental family and cultural activities in youth account for these differences. Art instruction is only indirectly related to the educational level and occupational status of the future partner, because both are related to cultural climate in the parental family.

In contrast to the significant effects on cultural participation the data show only show small effects of art education on the educational and socio-economic careers of the students. Student who elect art examinations more often choose further education which is art related and they more often end up in art related professions. Neither the predicted detrimental effects are found, nor is there much support for the cultural reproduction theory, which predicts profitable effects.

**Discussion**

Justification of art education as a valuable segment of general education has been a continuing concern for art educators. An educational reform in Dutch secondary education will end the present possibility of election of examination subjects. Instead students can choose from a limited number of examination packets. These so-called profiles are either science-oriented, economy-oriented or humanities/language oriented. A hotly debated issue is whether the arts should be an obligatory part of the humanities/languages profile. Universities are opposed to that because productive art education (painting, music-making, etc.) has no counterpart at the university level. Arguments about the detrimental effects of art subjects on later educational careers have been put forward again. The findings of our study can be used as counter-arguments in this discussion. Moreover the data show that art instruction can be a valuable tool in a cultural policy which is aimed at the stimulation of receptive and productive cultural participation.

Three theoretical models concerning the prediction of cultural participation, and more specific concerning the association between education and cultural participation are available: the instruction model, the general ability model and the family background model. One may conclude that according to our data none of the three models alone is capable of explaining cultural participation at later age, but that factors from all models play a part. Furthermore when we look at the proportion of variance in cultural participation that is predictable from the combination of factors we conclude that productive participation is less predictable than receptive participation. One of the reasons could be that in amateur art the factor talent plays an important role and this variable is missing in our models. The operationalization of such a variable in survey research is problematic however and only the measurement of someone's self-perception of creative abilities seems feasible.

Finally let us return to the criticism of the art educators from the child centered movement and their fear that formal assessment through examinations would restrict and impoverish art education. The self-written reports of students on the effects of the art instruction they received 10 to 20 years ago disclosed a wide variety of learning experiences. Most of the learning effects had to do with the art domain. In addition to that fundamental learning experiences regarding personal growth and self-knowledge were expressed. The following examples show that a discipline-oriented art education does not rule out these valuable effects:

*"Drawing was one of the few subjects that stressed what comes from the students themselves."*

*"The things I learned mainly concern myself. The arts gave me self-confidence not only in artistic capacities but more important about myself in general."*

*"My teacher gave me and my fellow-students the freedom to discover, to experiment and to learn for ourselves and taught us not to be afraid of that."*

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Further information:

Dr F. Haanstra
SCO-Kohnstamm Institute
University of Amsterdam
Wibautstraat 4
1091 GM Amsterdam
Netherlands

phone: +31 20 525 1365
fax: +31 20 525 1300
e-mail: folkert@sco.educ.uva.nl